

Message Text

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FOR UNDER SECRETARY HABIB ONLY

EO 11652: GDS
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SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL MURDANI

REF: (A) STATE 138985, (B) STATE 166459

1. SUMMARY: GENERAL MURDANI CONTINUES TO FEEL THAT PRESIDENT SUHARTO DOUBTFUL ABOUT FIRMNESS AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP, INCLUDING ATTITUDE TOWARD TIMOR, AND THAT SOME DIRECT APPROACH TO PRESIDENT DESIREABLE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL MURDANI JULY 6 I REPORTED TO HIM IN GENERAL TERMS ON WASHINGTON TALKS. IN RESPONSE, HE MADE THESE POINTS:

A. WHILE HIS REPRESENTATIVE ON DELEGATION (COLONEL SOEDARSONO) REPORTED GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH MEETINGS, HE FELT TEHY APPEARED TO REEMPHASIZE THAT U.S. ACCORDS INDONESIA RELATIVELY LOW PRIORITY.

B. PRESIDENT DECIDED AT LAST MINUTE THAT HE (MURDANI) SHOULD NOT ATTEND WASHINGTON TALKS. PRIMARY REASON WAS IMPORTANCE PRESIDENT ATTACHES TO MURDANI'S INFLUENCE AMONG MILITARY AND FEAR THAT MURDANI'S PRESTIGE WOULD SUFFER IF,
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AS APPEARED LIKELY, HE RETURNED EMPTY HANDED FROM WASHINGTON.

MURDANI STRESSED THAT, IN MAKING THIS DECISION PRESIDENT WELL AWARE OF REASONS WHY U.S. COULD NOT MAKE DRAMATIC NEW PROPOSALS TO INDONESIA AT THIS TIME BUT THIS NOT SO EASY TO EXPLAIN TO OTHERS.

C. MURDANI PERSONALLY FEELS U.S. RELATIONSHIP VITAL FOR INDONESIAN AND THAT INDONESIA HAS NO REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE. HE STRESSES THIS TO PRESIDENT SUHARTO AND TO OTHERS IN MILITARY.

D. GENERAL DISAPPOINTMENT AMONG INDONESIAN MILITARY WITH U.S. SUPPORT ARISES FROM GROWING FEELING THAT INDONESIA SERIOUSLY EXPOSED. GOVERNMENT OF NEW ORDER HAS CONSCIOUSLY EMPHASIZED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVER MILITARY SECURITY. THIS WAS NOT SERIOUS AS LONG AS U.S. WAS IN VIETNAM. NOW SITUATION HAS CHANGED AND MILITARY FEELS INCREASINGLY THAT INDONESIA'S OWN PRIORITIES SHOULD CHANGE. MILITARY LEADERSHIP UNHAPPY BECAUSE NO REAL SECURITY PARALLEL EXISTS TO FIVE-YEAR ECONOMIC PLAN. NO SERIOUS CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN, FOR EXAMPLE, TO DEFENSE OF SIGNIFICANT NKY PROJECTS SUCH AS ARUN GAS FIELD. (THROUGHOUT THIS PORTION OF CONVERSATION MURDANI'S GROWING ANIMUS TOWARD TECHNOCRATS WAS CLEARLY EVIDENT.)

E. MURDANI CONTINUES TO EMPHASIZE TO FELLOW OFFICERS THAT SOVIETS REPRESENT NO REAL ALTERNATIVE SOURCE OF MILITARY SUPPLY. SOVIET POWER IS TOO NEAR AND INDONESIANS CANNOT BE CERTAIN OF SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARD THEM. GENERAL SUPPORT FOR U.S. EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE FROM SEVERAL SOURCES. SOVIETS WOULD HAVE GREATER POWER OVER SUPPORT AND SPARE PARTS IF INDONESIAN DEPENDENT UPON THEM.

F. HOPEFULLY TALKS BETWEEN PGET AND PORTUGAL WILL BE SUCCESSFUL AND TIMOR ISSUE MIGHT WELL BE NEAR CONCLUSION. MURDANI SAID PRESIDENT SUHARTO PUZZLED BY U.S. ATTITUDE REFLECTED IN REFUSAL INVITATIONS. MURDANI ASKED WHETHER U.S. WILL ULTIMATELY RECOGNIZE INTEGRATION.

3. IN RESPONSE I MADE THESE POINTS:

A. INDONESIA SHOULD NOT JUDGE U.S. PRIORITIES SOLELY IN SECRET

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TERMS OF AID LEVELS WHICH ARE ESTABLISHED BY SEVERAL FACTORS INCLUDING IMMEDIATE VULNERABILITY OF RECIPIENT COUNTRIES, HISTORICAL FACTORS AND DOMESTIC ATTITUDES. SPECIAL EFFORTS MADE BY ADMINISTRATION TO MAINTAIN APPRECIABLE PROGRAM FOR INDONESIA IN FACE SERIOUS RESERVATIONS IN CONGRESS AND IN OTHER PARTS OF EXECUTIVE SHOULD BE SEEN AS CLEAR EVIDENCE HIGH PRIORITY PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY ATTACH TO RELATIONS WITH INDONESIA.

B. INDONESIA SHOULD NOT CONCLUDE THAT SIGNIFICANT EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN AND STRENGTHEN RELATIONS ARE AT A STAND-STILL BECAUSE OF U.S. ELECTION PROCESS. DESPITE ELECTION YEAR, ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT AND SUCCESSFUL EFFORT ON BEHALF OF INDONESIA. BASIC ATTITUDES ENCOUNTERED IN THIS EFFORT WILL NOT NECESSARILY CHANGE WHATEVER OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION. CONTINUING INDONESIAN DIALOGUE WITH U.S. REMAINS IMPORTANT.

C. WE WOULD HOPE PRESIDENT SUHARTO WOULD APPRECIATE THAT DESPITE DIFFICULTIES, WE HAVE MERGED WITH TWO-YEAR MILITARY AID LEVEL FOR INDONESIA VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL WITH THAT DISCUSSED WITH GENERAL MURDANI WHEN HE WAS IN WASHINGTON LAST YEAR ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN CHANGE IN MIX BETWEEN GRANT AND FMS. IMPORTANT THING IS THAT WE HAVE NOT STEPPED BACK FROM BASIC LEVEL DISCUSSED AT THAT TIME. FURTHER, SECRETARY HELD OUT PROSPECT OF IMPROVED FMS TERMS IN FY-77.

D. OUR STANCE ON TIMOR ISSUE, PARTICULARLY WITH REFERENCE TO INVITATIONS, HAS BEEN BASED NOT ON RESERVATIONS TOWARD INDONESIAN ACTION BUT ON DESIRE AVOID CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WOULD MAKE THESE ACTIONS AN ISSUE ON U.S. OR CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR OUR BILATERAL PROGRAMS. PRESIDENT SHOULD HAVE NO DOUBT THAT WE UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE INDONESIA'S PROBLEM AND THAT WE HAVE NO DESIRE EXPRESS OPPOSITION SUCH ACTIONS. IF ISSUES WITH PORTUGAL RESOLVED, I EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT U.S., WOULD, AS NECESSARY, RECOGNIZE TIMOR INTEGRATION.

4. MURDANI SAID THESE WERE IMPORTANT STATEMENTS AND ASKED IF I INTENDED CONVEY THEM PERSONALLY TO PRESIDENT SUHARTO. I SAID I HOPED THEY COULD BE CONVEYED TO PRESIDENT SUHARTO AND
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ASSUMED THAT HE WOULD DO SO. HE AGREED TO DO SO BUT SAID THERE WAS DISTINCT ADVANTAGE IN DIRECT AMERICAN APPROACH TO "CORRECT ANY MISUNDERSTANDING." HE SAID RECENT DIRECT APPROACH BY AMBASSADOR WOOLCOTT OF AUSTRALIA TO PRESIDENT WAS EXAMPLE. I SAID I WOULD REPORT HIS VIEWS TO YOU BUT MADE NO REQUEST OR COMMITMENT PENDING REVIEW IN DEPARTMENT OF THIS CONVERSATION.

5. I SEE ADVANTAGES TO CONVEYING THESE VIEWS DIRECTLY TO PRESIDENT SUHARTO TOGETHER WITH OTHERS RELATING TO MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY. PRECISE SUGGESTIONS FOLLOW IN SEPARATE TELEGRAM.
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